

Laughlin chaplain finds ‘mission’ in military, page 11

Border Eagle

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Network security important to mission

By Airman 1st Class
Timothy J. Stein
Editor

Military bases can face many dangers, and one of the biggest is network security.

“Network security is one of the most important things there is,” said Staff Sgt. Alan James, 47th Communications Squadron information assurance office NCO in charge. “Almost every [base member] uses computers now and passes information [to other people]. If network security isn’t upheld that information becomes vulnerable.”

The biggest threat to network security is computer viruses, said Sergeant James.

“Viruses can really hamper and detract from the mission,” said Sergeant James. “If one computer on base gets infected it can start flooding the rest of the network.”

See **Network**, page 4



Photo by Airman 1st Class Timothy J. Stein

The man in the mask

Airman 1st Class Debra Ramirez, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron, fits Col. Dan Woodward, 47th Flying Training Wing commander, with a gas mask Wednesday. Colonel Woodward is deploying soon to Pakistan for approximately 90 days. For some final words from Colonel Woodward, see page 2.

Air Force announces promotions to major

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE – Nineteen Laughlin captains were selected for promotion to major when the Air Force announced the results of the major promotion board Thursday.

The Air Force selected 2,540 captains for promotion to major in the 2003B line of the Air Force, chaplain, nurse corps, medical service corps and biomedical service corps boards.

Selectees were notified by their commanders. The entire list will be posted on the Air Force Personnel

Center’s Web site at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil by Saturday.

The board convened Dec. 8 and considered 3,410 officers. The results of the 2003 board are as follows:

■ Line of the Air Force – 2,132 selected from 2,287 considered for a 93.2-percent select rate in-the-promotion zone; and 41 selected from 554 considered for a 7.4-percent select rate above-the-promotion zone. The promotion opportunity for the line of the Air Force board was 95 percent.

■ Chaplain – 14 selected from 19 considered for a 73.7-percent select rate in-the-promotion zone; and three selected from six considered for a 50-percent select rate above-the-promotion zone. The promotion opportunity for the chaplain board was 85 percent.

■ Nurse Corps – 141 selected from 200 considered for a 70.5-percent select rate in-the-promotion zone; and 19 selected from 107 considered for a

See **Major**, page 4

Newslines

Promotion party set

A promotion party for Lt. Col. Timothy Sowin, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron commander, is set for 5:30 p.m. today at Club XL.

There will be hors d’oeuvres and an open bar for a limited time. All base members are invited to attend.

Muslim briefings scheduled

A Muslim cultural and religious information briefing is scheduled for 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Wednesday at Anderson Hall. Chaplain (1st Lt.) Walid Habash, one of the Air Force’s two Muslim chaplains, will speak on the Muslim religion and culture to provide a better understanding of the situation U.S. forces are facing in the Middle East. All base members and their families are invited to attend.

For details, call 298-5111.

Crud tournament set

The wing commander is sponsoring a Crud tournament for all permanent-party officers. The tournament will be held at Club XL beginning at 6 p.m. April 2.

For more information or to sign up, call Capt. Kat Burkhead at 298-5223 by 4:30 p.m. March 12.

Deployment stats

Deployed:	37
Returning in 30 days:	27
Deploying in 30 days:	4

Mission status

(As of Tuesday)

Days behind or ahead:

T-37, -1.76	T-1, 2.10
T-38, -1.40	T-6, -1.06

Mission capable rate:

T-37, 91.0%	T-1, 82.5%
T-38, 73.4%	T-6, 77.0%

Team XL: Stay focused, look for opportunities



Commander's Corner

By Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training Wing commander

We are an expeditionary Air Force and an expeditionary wing. Our mission statement is clear: "Train the world's best pilots and deploy expeditionary forces worldwide to fight and win America's wars... period!"

Each of us must understand we have a responsibility to deploy. It is part of who we are as a service and is key to what we do. Neither rank nor position stands in the way of need, and so I am proud and grateful I will be deployed this month to Islamabad, Pakistan.

Since I have been in command, nearly 200 members of Team XL have deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and many other places. Just as Laughlin does every day as a team, these deployees have helped America fight our global war on terrorism – a war that must be won.

I have known about and indirectly approved each deployment and, in my own way, wished each deployee well. We have tried to take care of their families so that our deployees could focus on taking care of their deployed missions. And when they have returned, we have tried to make clear how much we appreciate their service. That is the right sight picture... It is the right thing to do.

For my part, I ask that while I am gone,



Photo by Airman 1st Class Timothy J. Stein

Col. Dan Woodward, 47th Flying Training Wing commander, tries on a pair of desert flight boots in his office Wednesday to ensure a proper fit.

you continue to do the extraordinary things you do every day that make Team XL the finest organization I have ever seen. The challenges we will face over the next few

months are significant and include:

- Safely training the world's best pilots while operating with a closed center runway
- Preparing to beddown our first T-38C aircraft
- Completely refurbishing the center runway in just 75 days
- Moving fully one half the medical group into temporary facilities to allow for renovation, while maintaining high-quality patient services
- Groundbreaking and construction of a new wing headquarters building
- Maintaining a growing fleet of T-6 aircraft while slowly drawing down the venerable T-37 fleet
- Building a culture of fitness that makes us all better equipped to meet the challenges of our mission... and on and on.

Yet, I am absolutely certain the leadership team we will have in place while I am gone will turn these challenges and many others into opportunities and from there... successes. That is what we have done in the past and what we will always do.

I ask that over the next few months, each of you redouble your efforts, your commitment to this wing, our Air Force and our nation. Look for opportunities to make something better every day and build on the foundations that are in every corner of the wing. If you do that, everything else will take care of itself... every day.

(Editor's Note: Colonel Woodward will serve as the deputy chief of the Pakistan Liaison Cell. He will be assigned to the U.S. Embassy's Office of the U.S. Defense Representative and will serve as the liaison between the U.S. and Pakistan militaries.)

Border Eagle

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Deadlines, Advertising

News for the Border Eagle should be submitted to the 47th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office, Bldg. 338, Laughlin AFB, TX, 298-5262. **Copy deadline is close of business each Thursday the week prior to publication.**

Advertising should be submitted to the Del Rio News-Herald, 2205 Bedell, Del Rio, TX, 774-4611. Advertising should be submitted by 4 p.m. each Friday.

Submissions can be e-mailed to: timothy.stein@laughlin.af.mil or sheila.johnston@laughlin.af.mil.

Sexual-assault prevention is team effort



View from the Top

By Gen. Donald G. Cook
Air Education and Training Command commander

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE— Recent reports alleging a rash of sexual assaults at Sheppard Air Force Base over the past year gravely concern me.

These reports should gravely concern you as well because assault of any kind is not only criminal, it unconditionally violates the respect for human dignity that forms the foundation of our Air Force.

Simply put, the allegation of sexual assault will affect unit cohesion and morale.

Have no doubt, you – and all airmen – are personally responsible for preventing assaults of any kind. When our best efforts to deter these egregious crimes fail and violations occur, you have a moral obligation to report them to the appropriate authorities.

You also have a moral responsibility to seek immediate and compassionate aid for victims and fully cooperate with all subsequent investigations so perpetrators are punished when such behavior is reported or discovered and corroborated by vigorous investigative procedures. We will not serve with known criminals in our midst!

As a result of these reports, I directed Col. K.C. McClain, Air Education and Training Command's deputy director of operations for technical training, to lead a fact-finding review team to examine the situation at Sheppard. Colonel McClain and her team arrived at Sheppard Feb. 16 and immediately went to work.

The group, comprised of officials representing the command's family support center, inspector general, military equal opportunity, personnel, security forces, staff judge advocate and surgeon general offices, was

charged to assess the climate and examine the effectiveness of all plans, programs, policies and procedures in place at Sheppard to deter sexual assaults.

Additionally, the group evaluated the base's plans, programs, policies and procedures to ensure swift and appropriate actions are being taken when sexual assaults are reported or discovered. The group also examined previously reported assaults to confirm proper actions were taken in each case.

Colonel McClain and her team expeditiously and uncompromisingly conducted a thorough review of all plans, programs, policies and procedures at Sheppard, interviewed more than 1,000 people, including commanders and randomly selected students, and administered a survey to more than 5,000 students.

The team determined through surveys that 95 percent of the students at Sheppard feel safe and secure; 90 percent stated wing leadership effectively handles sexual-assault allegations when reported; and that reporting sexual assaults when they occur is encouraged by wing leadership.

The review also determined that the majority of students understand how to report sexual assaults, but unfortunately, many students are reluctant to report such assaults.

The predominant reasons students gave for their reluctance to report sexual assaults included concerns they would be delayed in training at Sheppard as an investigation moved forward; that they would be disciplined for misconduct collateral to the sexual assault (i.e. underage drinking); embarrassment; loss of confidentiality (only reports to the chaplain remain confidential); and peer pressure.

Though the review team's preliminary findings strongly suggest the environment at Sheppard is safe and robust programs exists to deter sexual assaults and swiftly respond to aid victims and punish perpetrators when sexual assaults occur, the review team also determined there are ways to improve upon existing programs.

For example, student training should be

expanded to include more emphasis on sexual-assault awareness, deterrence and reporting, and that such training be presented in a more interactive setting. Likewise, the current training programs for commanders, first sergeants, military training leaders and instructors should be expanded to include additional training on sexual-assault awareness, deterrence and reporting.

We are looking at ways to implement these recommendations. We are also expanding our review to look at the plans, policies, programs and procedures to address sexual assault at all our bases to ensure we have no deficiencies in our objective to deter sexual assaults. We are also making sure that when our best efforts fail to deter these crimes, we swiftly and compassionately render aid to victims; thoroughly investigate the circumstances of these reports; and when the evidence dictates, we prosecute and punish perpetrators.

As airmen dedicated to protecting our country, we are all part of a very vital national defense team. Teammates must trust each other and care about each other. When one team member demonstrates disrespect for another teammate by criminal behavior such as sexual assault, trust is broken and the team is weakened.

Our important mission demands we hold ourselves to a higher standard. Sexual assault has no place in my Air Force; it shouldn't have a place in yours either!

Over the coming weeks and months, you are going to be hearing and learning more about this important issue. Listen and pay attention to what your commanders, first sergeants, supervisors and peers are telling you regarding the unacceptable nature of sexual assault. Commit yourself to act in a manner that demonstrates daily the respect you have for your teammates and for yourself.

Together we will continue to tackle the sexual-assault problem and ensure we maintain an environment that promotes the dignity and well-being of all our Air Force team members.



Actionline 298-5351 or actionline@laughlin.af.mil

Col. Dan Woodward
47th Flying Training Wing commander

This column is one way to work through problems that haven't been solved through normal channels. By including your name and phone number, you are assured of a timely personal reply. It's also useful if more information is needed to pursue your inquiry. We will make every attempt to ensure confidentiality when appropriate.

Before you call in or e-mail an

Actionline, please try to work out the problem through the normal chain of command or directly with the base agency involved. Please keep e-mails brief.

If your question relates to the general interest of the people of Laughlin, the question and answer may also be printed in the Border Eagle.

Thanks for your cooperation, and I

look forward to reading some quality ideas and suggestions.

Below are some useful telephone numbers that may be helpful when working your issue with a base agency.

Clinic	298-6311
Information line	298-5201
Public Affairs	298-5988
Security Forces	298-5900

Network, from page 1

Viruses are dangerous because they can destroy information saved on computers and cost time and manpower to fix, said Sergeant James.

Several new viruses are found every day said Sergeant James, and the 47th CS is constantly updating patches to prevent these viruses from infecting Laughlin computers.

It is very important people log off their computers at the end of the day but don't shut off their computers, said Sergeant James. After hours is normally when the 47th CS pushes the new patches to computers on the network and a computer can't receive the patch if it is shut down.

The best way to help protect against viruses is to delete any suspicious e-mails, said Sergeant James.

"Delete any suspicious e-mail and delete the deleted files e-mail," said Sergeant James.

There are other measures members can take to help boost network security, he said.

"Passwords are important to keeping unauthorized users out of the network," said Sergeant James.

While Laughlin requires an eight-character password consisting of at least one capital letter, lowercase letter, number and special character, Sergeant James said a 10-character password would be even better.

Each character someone adds to

his password makes it harder for another person to crack the code and gain unauthorized access to the network.

Another way to make sure unauthorized people don't get into the network is for users to use password-locked screen savers when they are going to be away from their computer for any amount of time.

The information assurance office is also concerned about information leaks users might make.

"People should be aware that they are not to be discussing classified information over unsecured telephone lines and computers," said Pedro Bernal, 47th CS information assurance office manager.

The information assurance office is currently in its biennial telecommunications monitoring and assessment program certification process.

It is an unending program designed to inform individuals using government-owned, unsecured telecommunications devices that they are all subject to monitoring by the Air Intelligence Agency, said Mr. Bernal.

The purpose of the monitoring is to determine if unsecured communication system are used to transmit sensitive or classified information.

People need to know they could be monitored and realize discussing classified information over unsecured lines is not authorized even if accidental, said Mr. Bernal.

Major, from page 1

17.8-percent select rate above-the-promotion zone. The promotion opportunity for the nurse corps was 80 percent.

■ Medical Service Corps – 53 selected from 58 considered for a 91.4-percent select rate in-the-promotion zone; and three selected from 10 considered for a 30-percent select rate above-the-promotion zone. The promotion opportunity for the medical service corps board was 95 percent.

■ Biomedical Science Corps – 129 selected from 148 consid-

ered for an 87.2-percent select rate in-the-promotion zone; and five selected from 21 considered for a 23.8-percent select rate above-the-promotion zone. The promotion opportunity for the biomedical science corps board was 90 percent.

There are no below-the-promotion zone opportunities to major.

In other promotion news, seven Laughlin first lieutenants have been selected for promotion to captain.

(Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)

Major selects

- Michael Brock, 86th Flying Training Squadron
- Robert Goddard, 87th FTS
- Graham Hicks, 86th FTS
- Darryl Insley, 84th FTS
- William Maher, 87th FTS
- Zane Marshall, 86th FTS
- Rico McGee, 84th FTS
- Shawn McManus, 47th Operations Support Squadron
- Jarrod Moseley, Wing Safety
- Lisa Nemeth, 47th OSS
- Erik Parker, 87th FTS
- Adam Reiman, 47th OSS

- Jody Reven, 47th Operations Group
- Dean Richardson, 86th FTS
- Ian Smith, 86th FTS
- Paul Songy, 87th FTS
- Alan Springston, 85th FTS
- John Thaxton, 85th FTS
- Alan Thode, 87th FTS

Captain selects

- Mark Colwell, 86th FTS
- Justin, Grittens, 84th FTS
- Adam Hepp, 85th FTS
- Jaime Rivas, 47th MDG
- John Schultz, 86th FTS
- Jim Stokman, 84th FTS
- Kiristin Young, 47th ADS

Newslines

Wellness classes set

A Diabetes Wellness class will be held from 9 to 11:30 a.m. followed by a Healthy Heart class from 1 to 2 p.m. March 16 in the 47th Medical Group family practice conference room.

Information on nutritional strategies, exercise, and medications will be covered.

For more information, call 298-6463 or 298-6464.

Female mentoring class set

As part of Women's History Month events, a mentoring session for all female officers will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 18 in the Daedalian Room at Club XL.

For more information, call 298-5111.

Special tax benefits explained

Tax laws provide some special benefits for active members of the military, including those serving in combat zones.

Members who served in a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area can exclude certain pay from income.

The IRS automatically extends the deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes, filing claims for refund and taking other actions related to federal income tax for U.S. Armed Forces personnel serving in a combat zone.

The IRS also extends the deadline for those in the U.S. Armed Forces deployed overseas away from their permanent duty station in support of operations in a hazardous duty area but outside the qualified hazardous duty area.

The deadline for filing returns, making payments or taking any other action with the IRS is extended for at

least 180 days after either the last day of qualifying combat zone service, or the last day of any continuous qualified hospitalization for injury from service in the combat zone.

Tax help is still available. Set up an appointment with your squadron representative or call the tax center at 298-4858.

Lost-and-found items at SFS

The 47th Security Forces Squadron has many found items in its lost-and-found box. Items include necklaces, rings, keys and purses. People missing items can call 298-5462 to find out if these items have been turned in.

College registration open

Registration for the spring term at Park University is open now until March 15. Late registration is open from March 15 through 22.

For more information, call Vikki Cunningham at 298-5593.

New TMO procedures set

The Traffic Management Office Personal Property Section will now focus entirely on counseling inbound and outbound personnel on personal property entitlements and quality assurance functions, while the actual scheduling of personal property shipments will be the responsibility of the Joint Personnel Property Shipping Office located in San Antonio.

TMO will coordinate the booking of shipments with JPPSO, but it is important people contact TMO as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to conduct personal property counseling and schedule the shipment. This is key to facilitate a smooth move.

To arrange for an appointment or for any questions, call 298-5388, 298-5389 or 298-5189.

Secretary briefs lawmakers in ‘posture’ hearing

By Master Sgt. Scott Elliott
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – The F/A-22 Raptor, sexual harassment, force blending and the tanker lease program were all topics of discussion as the service’s senior executive testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday.

Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche, along with the other service secretaries, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee for the service secretaries’ posture portion of the 2005 Department of Defense Authorization hearing series.

Despite some minor glitches, the F/A-22 Raptor is destined to guarantee American air dominance, the

secretary said.

“The limiting problem we have now ... has to do with failure of small parts on the plane, such that you don’t get enough sorties per day,” Secretary Roche said.

One of the problems is there are only a few subcontractors able to replace faulty parts. The secretary said that problem would plague any future aircraft produced in the United States, including the Joint Strike Fighter.

“It’s good to know it now, so hopefully we can prepare for it,” he said.

The secretary noted that Russian aircraft currently in development compare favorably with the Air Force’s F-15 Eagle, but the Raptor would prevail in a head-to-head match up.

“The planes the former Soviet

Union are constructing are very good. But, you bring the F/A-22 into the picture and it changes dramatically,” he said. “The F/A-22 ... deters anybody from building a system and thinking they can achieve air dominance because they can’t.”

Turning his attention to the area of sexual harassment, the secretary assured the senators that the Air Force is aggressively investigating all reports. Secretary Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper recently commissioned an assessment of sexual assault response systems Air Force-wide.

“(We) tasked our major command commanders to include education, training, prevention, reporting procedures, response programs and program

oversight in their comprehensive reviews,” he said.

The assessment was ordered before recent reports of sexual harassment at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. The secretary said an initial review had been conducted within Pacific Air Forces last autumn to set a benchmark for the rest of the service to follow.

The Air Force’s attempt to lease tankers from Boeing to replace portions of the aging KC-135 Stratotanker fleet came under scrutiny as well. Several lawmakers, including Arizona Senator John McCain, requested the Department of Defense provide Congress documents and e-mails about the proposed tanker lease to aid their review of the plan.



Leaders talk to Congress about long-range strike

By Master Sgt. Scott Elliott
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON – A variant of the F/A-22 Raptor is one consideration for the Air Force’s next long-range strike aircraft, the Air Force’s senior leaders said.

Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James G. Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper met with members of the House Committee on Armed Services on Feb. 26 to discuss the Air Force’s portion of the 2005 National Defense Authorization budget request.

Two congressmen, Ike Skelton from Missouri and Dr. Phil Gingrey of Georgia, specifically asked about the service’s plan to upgrade the long-range bomber force.

“We’re trying to define what piece of technology we need to take the big leap to be able to do long-range strike,” General Jumper said. “One of the candidates is a variation of the F/A-22, taking full advan-

tage of the development work that’s been done on that airplane.”

Selecting the F/A-22 as the basis for the new bomber makes sense because it would be very efficient to build, the secretary said.

“It is a bomber variant of the F/A-22, which would give it dramatically greater range – somewhat short of the B-2 Spirit – but still it’s able to fight and depart quickly,” Secretary Roche said. “A problem with our very large bombers is they don’t have the ability to fight on their own and, given where we’re thinking of using very stealthy systems, the ability to escape a particular problem – or to shoot back and scoot out – is very important.”

The secretary admitted that the F/B-22 would not be able to carry as much ordnance as heavy bombers, but the use of precision-guided munitions would more than make up the difference. The F/B variant of the Raptor would also have larger wings than the F/A model.

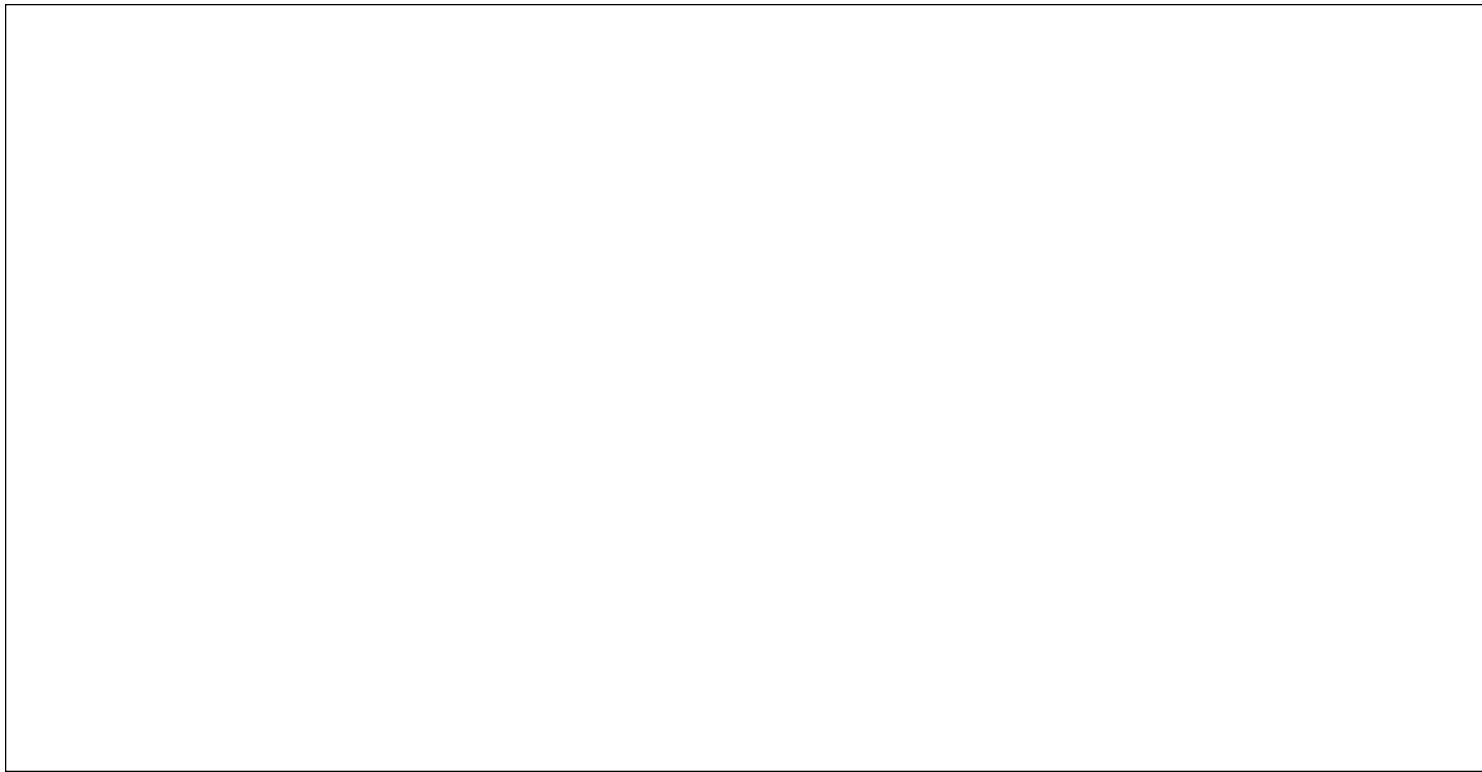
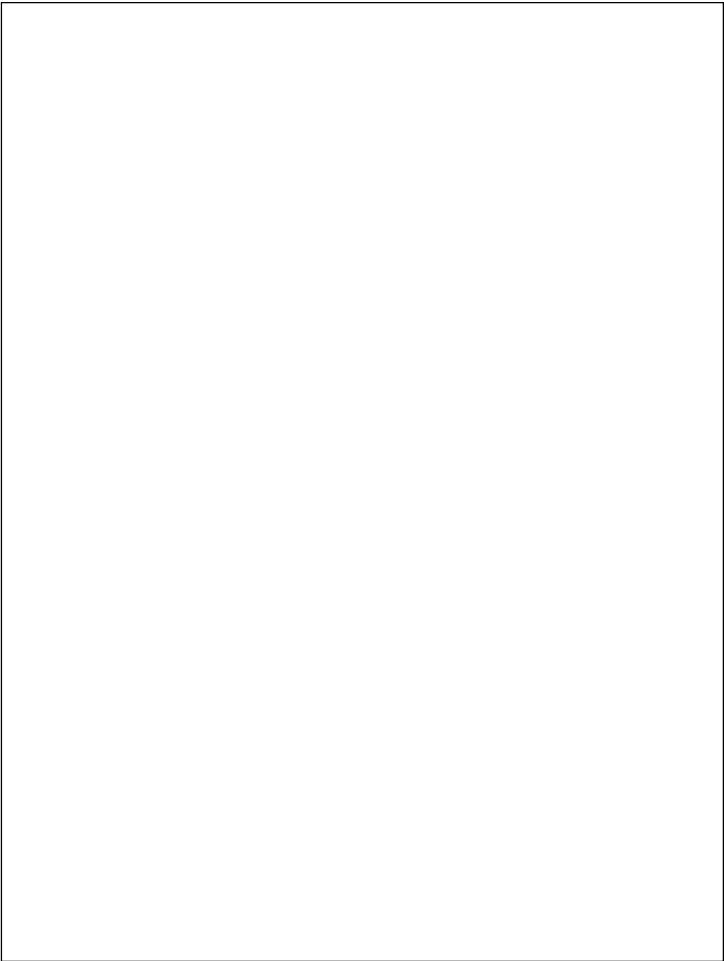
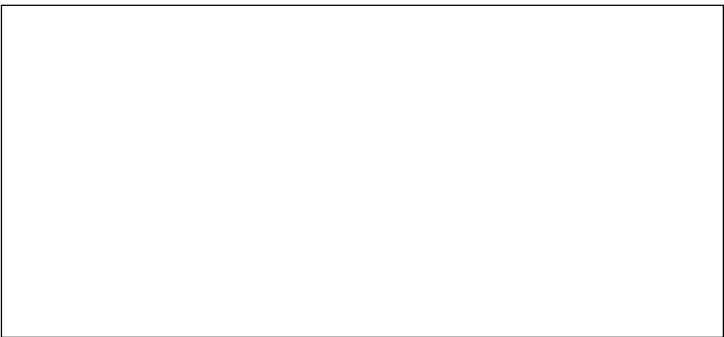
“We now have weapons that are so ... precise, that instead of talking about how many aircraft do we need to attack a target, it’s how many targets can we attack with one flight of the airplane,” he said.

The F/B-22 would also address the issue of balancing standoff capability and proximity, General Jumper said.

“A regional-type bomber is attractive because it is able to penetrate deep, loiter for long periods of time and work problems on the ground with a very short time of flight of the weapon because it’s overhead,” the general said.

General Jumper said that some standoff weapons, such as cruise missiles, could require an hour or more of flight time to get to the target.

“It’s the time-of-flight balance that you’re searching for in what makes a weapon such as this attractive,” he said. “It has to be stealthy. It has to retain, in this case, the benefits of supercruise, to aid in its penetration and to loiter for long periods of time.”



Officials introduce war on terrorism medals

WASHINGTON— Servicemembers serving at home and abroad in the war on terrorism will now be recognized for that service. Department of Defense officials announced Feb. 26 the final approval of two new medals and their criteria.

Individuals who have deployed for operations Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom will be awarded the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal. The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal will be awarded to those who served in airport security operations in the United States following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks or who supported operations Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle or Iraqi Freedom.

The front of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal features a shield adapted from the Great Seal of the United States. The back includes the eagle, serpent and swords from the medal's front-side design along with the inscription "War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal."

"These medals recognize the significant contributions members of the armed forces bring to bear in combating terrorism in all forms throughout the world – for both current and future op-

erations," stated a DoD news release.

Individuals can receive both medals if they meet the individual criteria, officials said.

To be awarded the expeditionary medal, individuals must have been deployed outside the United States for OEF or OIF for 30 consecutive days or 60 nonconsecutive days. The time requirement is not needed if the individual engaged in combat, was wounded or killed in action, or was medically evacuated for any reason, officials said.

The area of eligibility encompasses the U.S. Central Command area, (excluding the lower Horn of Africa) Middle East, eastern Turkey, Philippines, Diego Garcia and all air spaces above the land and adjacent water areas, according to the release.

Each day aircrew members fly sorties into designated areas counts as one day of deployment toward the 30- or 60-day requirement.

Individuals engaged in actual combat may be eligible for battle stars on the expeditionary medal. Only a combatant commander can initiate a request for a battle star, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the



Courtesy photo

The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal has an eagle and wings display, with a terrestrial globe and the inscription "War on Terrorism Service Medal." The reverse side features a laurel wreath. The medal's final approval was announced Feb. 26.

approving authority for them, the release states.

Servicemembers eligible to receive the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal must have participated in or supported operations on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Service medal eligibility dates run from Sept. 27, 2001, to May 31, 2002, for individuals who served in airport security operations.

The same 30- or 60-day require-

ments apply to the service medal as to the expeditionary medal.

"Each military department will prescribe appropriate regulations for processing awarding and wearing of the medals and ribbons for their servicemembers, to include application procedures for veterans, retirees and next-of-kin," the DoD release stated.

(Courtesy of Air Force Print News)

Policy changes affect civil service employees

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE – The 2004 National Defense Authorization Act put in to motion changes to civilian pay, overtime and leave.

The legislation also launched the National Security Personnel System, the biggest overhaul of the government's civilian personnel system in decades.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld called the changes "transformational." President George Bush agreed.

"This bill also advances the vital work of transforming the personnel system for civilian defense workers so we can put the right person in the right

job to meet the challenges we face," Secretary Rumsfeld said.

Changes include:

■ **National Security Personnel System:** The secretary of defense and the director of the Office of Personnel Management now have the authority to establish a new human resources management system. This includes a new labor relations system for Department of Defense employees. The act also provides the secretary of defense with the authority to establish separation and retirement incentives and additional staffing flexibilities. For more information on NSPS, go to www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/index.html.

■ **Modification of the overtime hourly pay cap:** The act modifies the hourly overtime pay cap for certain federal employees who are exempt from (not covered by) the overtime pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. For FLSA-exempt employees entitled to receive overtime pay, the hourly rate of overtime pay is either the greater of one and one-half times the minimum hourly rate of basic pay for GS-10 or the employee's own hourly rate of basic pay. These include any applicable special salary rate, locality rate of pay, or special pay adjustment for law enforcement officers. The OPM is amending its regulations to reflect this new provi-

sion in the near future. The changes became effective Nov. 24.

■ **Military leave for mobilized federal civilian employees:** Employees who perform full-time military service, as a result of a call or order to active duty supporting a contingency operation, are now entitled to 22 days of military leave each calendar year. An employee is entitled to the greater of his or her civilian or military pay, not both; however, an employee may choose to take annual leave instead of military leave to retain both civilian and military pay. The amendment applies to military service performed on or after Nov. 24.

■ **Senior Executive Service Pay:** The act establishes a new performance-based pay system for members of the Senior Executive Service, ends locality-based comparability payments for senior executives, and changes the threshold for imposing post-employment restrictions on certain senior executives. A memorandum on the new SES pay system is available online at www.opm.gov/oca/compmemo/2003/2003-19.

More information on entitlements is available at local base civilian personnel flights.

(Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)

Chapel information



Catholic

- Monday - Friday* ● Mass, 12:05 p.m.
- Saturday* ● Mass, 5 p.m., Reconciliation, 4:15 p.m. or by appointment
- Sunday* ● Mass, 9:30 a.m., Religious Education, 11 a.m.
- Thursday* ● Choir: 6 p.m., Rite of Christian Initiation, 7:30 p.m.

Protestant

- Wednesday* ● Choir, 7 p.m.; Protestant Women of the Chapel Ladies' Bible Study, 9 a.m.
- Sunday* ● General worship, 11 a.m., Contemporary worship, 9 a.m. in the base theater

Chaplain Staff

- Wing chaplain:* Chap. (Lt. Col.) Joseph Lim, Roman Catholic
- Senior Protestant:* Chap. (Capt.) Terri Gast, Presbyterian Church, USA
- Protestant:* Chap. (Capt.) Alex Jack, Independent Christian Church
- Protestant:* Chap. (1st Lt.) Kenneth Fisher, Evangelical Church Alliance

For more information on other denominations, chapel events or services, call 298-5111. For information on special events, see the Community Calendar on page 16.



'Scopes' get airmen quickly back on track

By 2nd Lt. Ben Silva
57th Medical Wing public affairs

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE – Wilford Hall Medical Center surgeons are getting basic military trainees back into training faster with the help of laparoscopy.

Surgical recoveries, which used to require four to six weeks, can now take as little as one to two weeks, according to medical officials.

One recent case typified the benefits laparoscopic procedures give not only the patient, but also the Air Force.

A basic trainee with appendicitis sought medical treatment. Doctors determined a laparoscopic appendectomy to remove the patient's appendix would be the best course of action. An appendix can be removed either laparoscopically or through a standard appendectomy by making a larger incision in the abdomen.

The procedure was a success and doctors anticipate the trainee will be back on duty in two weeks rather than six weeks of recovery time had they performed a traditional surgery.

"Had the patient gone through an open appendectomy his recovery time would be a lot longer," said Lt. Col.

(Dr.) Kevin Watkins, chief of surgical oncology. "With laparoscopic appendectomies, we are able to do most of the work in the inside of the patient without actually pulling things out through the abdominal wall. By doing this we are able to get the patient back to training a lot quicker.

"With open appendectomies, surgeons tend to do a lot of retraction and pulling on the abdominal wall, so surgeons actually pull on the muscles more and consequently you bruise the muscles more," he said.

Surgeons at Wilford Hall Medical Center conduct about 200 appendectomies a year. Roughly 50 to 60 of those cases belong to basic trainees.

"The difference in recovery time lies in the fact that with laparoscopic procedures smaller incisions are used including a camera and a telescope rather than the standard larger incisions," Dr. Watkins said. "In this case, we are able to get (the trainee) back to training with full activities in two weeks instead of six.

"In most cases, we are able to get (trainees) back to training within one week, but every case is different," he said. "Had the patient gone through the standard procedure, he probably would have been sent home and then later re-



Photo by 2nd Lt. Ben Silva

Wilford Hall Medical Center surgeons perform a laparoscopic appendectomy on a basic trainee while Dr. Delio Ortega (left), a general surgery resident, points out which direction the surgeons need to move inside the patient's abdomen.

cycled back to training at a later date."

Laparoscopic procedures can be used to examine abdominal organs or diagnose problems such as cysts, adhesions and infections. Despite their advantages, laparoscopic procedures remain somewhat controversial. Such procedures entail more instrumenta-

tion, which, in turn, cost more than open appendectomies.

"When you think about the long-term cost for the Air Force, you're actually saving money, because you get people back into the workforce or back into their normal training pattern in a shorter period of time," Dr. Watkins said.

Personnel services now available on AF Portal

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE – The days where people need to remember numerous user IDs and passwords for basic online personnel services are coming to an end thanks to the Air Force Portal.

All Laughlin members should register for an account between March 15 and 19.

"The portal is a powerful tool," said Col. Gregory Touhill, director of personnel data systems at the Air Force Personnel Center here. "We took the personnel applications our military and civilian employees use most often and made them accessible via the portal."

Among those accessible on the portal are virtual out-processing, retraining vulner-

ability lists, civilian employee career briefs and the Employment Benefits Information System.

"Now, an airman deployed anywhere in the world has access to his or her personnel records through the portal," he said. "Especially with so many high-demand applications available, it's time everyone got an account."

By logging on to the Air Force Portal, users will have "reduced sign-on" access to 14 of the most used personnel Web services, like the virtual military personnel flight and civilian employment pages that enhance mission capability for today's warfighter, said the colonel.

The Air Force Portal is

located at www.my.af.mil.

"Users won't have to remember several passwords and input them every time they want to get into a particular application anymore," Colonel Touhill said. "Instead, airmen can log into the portal when they come to work and use the available applications all day long."

The military personnel-related areas now available include:

- Virtual military personnel flight
- Air Force Officer Qualification Test score
- Military Personnel Data System status Web site
- Reporting an instance of production password change utility
- Reserve Management

Vacancy System

- Retraining vulnerability lists for the noncommissioned officer retraining program
 - Virtual out-processing
 - Web-based testing
- The civilian personnel-related areas now available include:
- Career brief
 - Electronic official Personnel Folder
 - Emergency Medical Data System
 - Employment Benefits Information System
 - Employment
 - Online Career Program registration

Having reduced sign-on access from desktop computers to personnel information saves people from having to wait in line at their local personnel flight, Colonel Touhill

said. Now for many of those services, users will not have to remember separate passwords, he said.

The Air Force chief of staff has said he wants all airmen to establish a portal account by April. Establishing an account takes only a few minutes, officials said.

Once logged into the portal, people can access the military and civilian self-service personnel features at the "Careers" tab.

For more information about the portal or any of the online applications, call the Air Force Contact Center at (800) 616-3775.

(Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)



Laughlin Salutes

Laughlin March Promotees

To master sergeant
■ Richard Crivens, 47th Contracting Squadron

To technical sergeant
■ Kenneth Ramelli, 47th Civil Engineer Squadron

To staff sergeant
■ Joshua Aston, 47th Security Forces Squadron

To senior airman
■ Micah Derieg, 47th Communications Squadron
■ Christina Yatsko, 47th Aeromedical-Dental Squadron

To airman 1st class
■ Robert Ashford, 47th

Services Division
■ Stephanie Briggs, 47th Operations Support Squadron
■ Travis Cleark, 47th SFS
■ Timothy Cooper, 47th SFS
■ Dustin Diamond, 47th CES
■ Rebekah Durkee, 47th CS
■ Sedelia Gonzales, 47th Comptroller Flight
■ Brett Holmes, 47th OSS
■ Nicole Jacobson, 47th OSS
■ Tory Murphy, 47th ADS
■ Daniel Ruhl, 47th CES
■ Nathan Vincent, 47th OSS



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or call Tech. Sgt.
Thomas Mayo at
298-4355.**

Chaplain finds calling in Air Force life

By Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill
Public affairs

Chaplain (1st Lt.) Kenneth Fisher understands what it truly means to serve.

The Protestant chaplain, assigned here as pastor of the contemporary worship service, comes from a family rich in military heritage.

His lineage of native Virginians has a combined military service of more than 300 years, making it no surprise that the chaplain chose to serve in the military.

"There is no question he's a servant of our country in our armed forces just like the rest of us," said Maj. Cliff Wilson, a T-6 instructor pilot and primary lay leader at the base's "The Gathering" contemporary worship service. "He's proactive and passionate about doing what's right, truthful and good. In my brief partnership with [him], there's no doubt he's willing to step outside the comfort zone and lead by example in doing the things necessary to bring good and change."

Many of those characteristics may be attributed to Chaplain Fisher's duty prior to becoming a commissioned officer. He was an enlisted Air Force Reserve member for 12 years in which most of his time was spent as an air technician on A-7II Corsairs and F-16C aircraft. Stationed at Richmond International Airport, Va., with the 192nd Fighter Wing, he worked as a crew chief. He then became a specialist on hydraulic systems and went on to learn a variety of other aircraft maintenance skills.

In 1997, however, he felt a calling to submit to vocational ministry.

"I was looking for happiness in all the wrong places," he said.

The chaplain said he purchased three vehicles within an 18-month period, and all were lemons. On the last new vehicle he bought, the transmission went out in the bank's parking lot.

He said that's when he heard five internal words, "You need to serve Me."

"When God speaks," the chaplain said, "there's only one thing to do ... obey!"

Chaplain Fisher focused on becoming a missionary with the Southern Baptist Convention, but needed a college degree first. Within two weeks of saying "yes to God," he said, Bluefield College came to his base as a satellite program. All of his Community College of the Air Force credits were accepted, and after 18 months of full-time night school he graduated with a bachelor's degree in organizational management and development.

Chaplain Fisher completed 20 hours at Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., followed by six weeks of missionary training in Virginia.

With everything but their house sold, he and his wife went to Southern Russia, west of Chechnya.

As a missionary there, he worked as the operations and logistics coordinator for a non-governmental organization that specialized in humanitarian aid.

"I thought in order to be a missionary, I had to be overseas," he said. "But through my experience, I discovered the Apostle Paul tells us to stay in the field in which we were first called."

That's when the chaplain realized that who he was had not changed, only his field had.

"I recognized the military as a mission field," he said.

Chaplain Fisher said he and his wife returned to the United States in 2001, and he continued with the seminary in Wake Forest, but this time commissioned as a second lieutenant chaplain candidate.

In February 2003, the chaplain was selected for active-duty service. He graduated with a Master of Divinity in counseling and set out to serve in the Air Force.

Chaplain Fisher said the transition from an enlisted member to a commissioned officer was one of the hardest things he'd ever done.

"I thought officers had it made," he said. "Little do others know just how much responsibility rests on



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill

Chaplain (1st Lt.) Kenneth Fisher (left) visits with Capt. John Holovich, 87th Flying Training Squadron instructor pilot, and Senior Airman Cheneldra Moore, 87th FTS aviation resource manager. Chaplain Fisher routinely makes visits to the squadrons to which he is assigned.

the shoulders of an officer. They pay the price for mistakes whether it's their watch or not."

The chaplain added that with great reward comes great responsibility, and an officer's yoke is that of responsibility.

"Of course, no other force delegates as much responsibility to its enlisted as our Air Force," he continued. "There are none finer, and without an outstanding airman and NCO, the mission would never be successful."

Chaplain Fisher practices what he speaks, which makes him essential to the success of Laughlin's chaplain service mission, said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Lim, 47th Flying Training Wing chaplain. "His drive and determination truly motivate and inspire people to do the best they can to meet the competing demands of our base population," he said.

Chaplain Lim said the junior chaplain is a man of deep faith. "In our business, faith directs our ministry to provide for the free

expression of our constitutional right to freedom of religion," he said. "Chaplain Fisher's sense of duty is overpowering. His commitment and love for people are evident in all of his associations."

That dedication can be seen frequently as Chaplain Fisher visits the base organizations to which he's assigned. He spends much of his time talking to members of the 84th and 87th Flying Training Squadrons, flight line maintenance and the 47th Medical Group.

Whether he's delivering coffee and doughnuts or just chatting with them about their work and personal issues, the chaplain believes people can make a difference, regardless of their position or state in life.

"It's up to each one of us to fix what's broken and change what's working to what's best," Chaplain Fisher said. "Each of these things involves work, and life is about work. Let's get busy fixing things, mentoring others and living with integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do."

Desert Storm veterans return after 13 years

By Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams
506th Air Expeditionary Group public affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq – When Saddam Hussein ordered his forces to march south through Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, little did he know of the resolve of the young airmen who would rise to the occasion to repulse the attack.

From November 1990 to May 1991, Senior Airmen Darrell Wiedenbeck, Elbert Bembry and Edward Timberman, and Airman 1st Class Steven Sepeda were young A-10 Thunderbolt II crew chiefs. Staff Sgt. Benjamin Hoover was an A-10 weapons loader. They worked together out of the King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia, as members of the 23rd Combined Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

Still working on A-10s 13 years later, this particular “band of brothers” is stationed together here to finish the job they so diligently started so long ago.

The then-young airmen have since gained in rank and responsibility, and are now charged with leading the future generation of aircraft maintainers.

Airmen Sepeda and Timberman are now technical sergeants, Airmen Wiedenbeck and Bembry are master sergeants, and Sergeant Hoover is now a senior master sergeant. All are deployed with the 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

During a recent reunion of the five sergeants, they had a lot to remember.

Most of them had a laugh when they remembered then-Airman Sepeda polishing his boots on the C-141 Starlifter before landing in Saudi Arabia. Once on the ground, the boots got dirty and all the work went to waste.

All of them said they remember the fright they had when the scud missiles started flying.

“I saw the scud missile that hit the bunker in Dhahran,” said Sergeant Sepeda, who was only a few miles away at the time.

“We started getting hit shortly

after that because a (news) reporter tipped off our A-10 location,” Sergeant Wiedenbeck said. “Before that, the scuds were just going overhead.”

They laugh about some of the antics that happened back then, but said they know the uncertainty of the situation gave them a greater seriousness, especially in bunker dives.

“During the first scud attack, the sirens scared me so bad that I just put on my gas mask,” Sergeant Timberman said. “I just got out of bed, put my mask on and ran to the bunker in my underwear. I was later instructed to put my pants on.”

The experience did not come without certain highlights.

“Timberman and I were under an aircraft listening to [former] President Bush on the radio as the first wave of the attack was coming back,” Sergeant Bembry said. “We were scared but not afraid. I was a young dude then.”

Sergeant Bembry also recalled his daily lunch routine then.

“I was known as PBJ because I ate two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch each day for six months,” he said. “I haven’t eaten peanut butter since I left Desert Storm.”

None of them have forgotten the oil fires in Kuwait either.

“It was like an eclipse,” Sergeant Sepeda said. “The sun was up but couldn’t come through.”

Despite the camaraderie, friendship, humorous experiences, uncertainty and the dedication to work, all the airmen said they still feel the loss of their friend and colleague, 1st Lt. Patrick Olson.

Flying an A-10 reconnaissance mission over Kuwait on Feb. 27, 1991, the lieutenant faced some bad weather and was hit by a surface-to-air missile. He tried landing with only one engine and no hydraulics, when the aircraft landing gear collapsed upon landing and flipped. Lieutenant Olson, a 26-year-old native of Washington, N.C., was killed.

Sergeant Hoover said he was affected by Lieutenant Olson’s loss more than the rest.

“(Lieutenant Olson) brought me mail and a pair of gloves that day,”



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams

From left, Tech. Sgt. Edward Timberman, Master Sgt. Elbert Bembry, Senior Master Sgt. Benjamin Hoover, Master Sgt. Darrell Wiedenbeck and Tech. Sgt. Steven Sepeda stand near an A-10 Thunderbolt II at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq. The five A-10 maintainers served in both operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom during their careers.

Sergeant Hoover said. “He always took care of us. He was a good friend. That day I watched him die. I watched him crash. I was told, ‘You’re his family. Go pick him up.’ And I did.”

Looking to the future, Sergeant Hoover said he believes the training of the previous generation affects the current one.

“We (were) gliding on the successes that Vietnam gave us,” he said. “We wanted to make our predecessors proud. We had to work to be the best. Laser-guided bombs and other high-tech weaponry (were) born in Vietnam. We got to use them in Desert Storm. It made us look like heroes.

“What I learned from Desert Storm prepared me well for the rest of my career,” he said. “I’ve got some great guys. These guys wanted to come to Iraq with me. There’s no limit to the talent that we brought over here.”

After 13 years of uncertainty over the future of Iraq since Operation Desert Shield began in 1990, the five 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron airmen said they are happy to be here.

“We thought it would have been the end of the Iraq situation during Desert Storm,” Sergeant Bembry said. “We never thought we’d be

back. Hopefully this time, this will be it.”

“I think there is a sense of urgency for Iraq and this whole operation in the eyes of the American public and for many of us,” Sergeant Sepeda said. “It has dragged on for 13 years. I think people are getting tired of this and want it to be over with.”

“We were all disappointed that we didn’t get to finish the job back then,” Sergeant Wiedenbeck said. “We understood the politics of the situation.

“I’m glad we are a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” he said, “especially being here when Saddam Hussein was captured. On Dec. 13, our alert A-10s launched shortly after our scheduled aircraft sorties. For security reasons, we are not able to verify the exact reasons for their mission or their location, but in our hearts we firmly believe our A-10s were overhead protecting our Army brethren during (the capture of) the Ace of Spades, Saddam Hussein. It’s great to now be 150 miles north of Baghdad, since we couldn’t finish the job 13 years ago. We’re all glad we had a second opportunity to come and finish the job.

“This is one last hurrah for the five of us,” he said. “This situation is resolved here.”



Photo by Jose Mendoza

Thanks for the words...

Brig. Gen. Leon Johnson (left), Air Education and Training Command mobilization assistant to the director of operations, receives a plaque from Col. Keith Traster, 47th Flying Training Wing vice commander, during the Black Heritage Banquet Dinner Saturday at the Fiesta Center. General Johnson was the guest speaker at the event.

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The *XLer*

Senior Airman Crystal Morris
47th Services Division

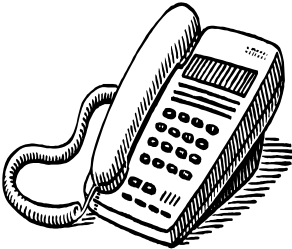
Hometown: Frederick, Okla.
Family: Husband, Terrell
Time at Laughlin: Eleven months
Time in service: Six years in the Army, one in the Air Force
Greatest accomplishment: Serving in two different branches of the military
Hobbies: Shoe shopping, watching movies, playing video games and spades, watching sports and studying law
Bad habit: I have a short temper.
Favorite movie: “The Color Purple”
Favorite musician: R. Kelly
If you could spend one hour with any person, who would it be? My grandmother. She had an amazing outlook on life.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Anthony Hill

Need the latest Laughlin information?

Call Laughlin's Information Line at 298-5201.



Command Chief: Fitness benefits readiness

By Airman Cecilia Rodriguez
14th Flying Training Wing
public affairs

COLUMBUS AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. – The start of a new fitness program this year has paid early dividends for the Air Force, said the command chief master sergeant of Air Education and Training Command.

Chief Master Sgt. Karl Meyers, at Columbus for a two-day site visit Feb. 25 and 26, said fitness programs are now ingrained from the first to the last days people spend as Air Force members.

“Already, I see a new fitness lifestyle taking effect, from the increased standards of basic military training, to the further enforced standards of technical training that make our people fit for their first duty assignments, to the elevated fitness routines practiced by our senior ranking enlisted (members),” Chief Meyers said. “Just as important as getting fit, I see camaraderie, morale and esprit de corps rising as our units are getting fit together.”

It’s important to adopt a fit lifestyle because Air Force jobs

demand it, the chief said. The Air Force sometimes endures difficult working environments and long hours, and a fit lifestyle improves its ability to handle the stress that comes with everyday jobs, as well as deployments.

“Our future deployments and contingency lifestyle will undoubtedly continue, so we need to be ready for anything, anywhere at anytime,” Chief Meyers said. “Besides being ready for duty, diet and exercise is proven to extend and better our lives. I think all of us deserve to live as long as we can, not only for ourselves and for our Air Force, but also for our families.”

Chief Meyers also said preparation is the key to a more enjoyable deployment.

“Rule No. 1 is to know your job,” he said. “Airmen should take what the Air Force has taught them and do their jobs the absolute best they can.”

It’s also imperative to make sure family is taken care of, he said.

“Anytime I’m away from home, I want to know that my family is okay,” the chief said. “Make sure to know where and who the key supporting agencies are on the base and what



Photo by Airman Cecilia Rodriguez

Airman 1st Class Heath Niemet shows Chief Master Sgt. Karl Meyers, command chief master sergeant of Air Education and Training Command, the Bauer compressor at the Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., fire station during the chief’s site visit to Columbus Feb. 25 and 26.

services they provide. A happy family always equates to a much happier deployed service member.”

The number of people eligible to deploy in the command went from 7,000 two years ago to almost 22,000 today.

“Our AETC mission of providing motivated and skilled professionals never stops,” Chief Meyers said. “We send instructors out to the field to bring deployed and operational perspectives back to the classroom, and we think that’s very important.”

Academy wins basketball conference title

U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. – Academy basketball player Nick Welch scored 17 points and Air Force’s stifling defense shut down San Diego State 61-49 Monday to complete the school’s undefeated home season and clinch its first Mountain West Conference title.

The 21-5 Falcons (11-2 in the conference) never finished higher than sixth place; then it was in the Western Athletic Conference.

The victory moves Air Force, which was picked to finish last in the MWC preseason poll, closer to its first postseason appearance since the 1962 NCAA Tournament.

The Falcons need to win at least one game at the MWC Tournament, held Thursday through March 12 in Denver, to enter the door to “March Madness.”

More than 5,800 fans attended

the Monday game, which was the final home game for Air Force seniors Marcus Jenkins, Joel Gerlach and A.J. Kuhle. Gerlach scored 14 points and tied his season-high with four 3-pointers, while Kuhle scored two points and dished out a career-high 11 assists, five more than the entire San Diego team.

The nation’s leading defense held San Diego’s Brandon Heath scoreless and allowed Chris Walton just two points. Heath went into the game averaging 14.5 points, and Walton was averaging 8.8.

Air Force closes out the regular season Saturday in Laramie, Wyo., against the University of Wyoming Cowboys. The Falcons will attempt to post the best regular-season record in the five-year history of the Mountain West Conference. No league team has ever finished 12-2.

(Courtesy of Air Force Print News)



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams

Air Force senior guard Tim Keller spoils the shot of San Diego State forward Chris Walton during the Falcon’s 61-49 win over the Aztecs. With the win, Air Force boosted its conference record to 11-2 and its overall record to 21-5, winning its first Mountain West Conference championship in men’s basketball. The Falcons close out regular season play Saturday at the University of Wyoming.